

# The AFCARS Report

Interim estimates for Fiscal Year 1998--April 2000 (3)

How many children were in foster care on September 30, 1998? **560,000**

**SOURCE:** Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data submitted for federal fiscal year (FY) 1998. FY 1998 ran from 10/1/97 through 9/30/98

**NOTES:** The foster care data used for this report come from the AFCARS annual foster care database for federal fiscal year (FY) 1998 (10/1/97 through 9/30/98). This database includes all children who have experienced foster care in 41 jurisdictions, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, during FY 1998 and whose information was reported prior April 1, 2000. The data have been de-duplicated so that children who experienced more than one foster care episode during FY 1998 only appear once in the database, their last episode. For national estimation purposes, if a State's data is not included in this database, the total number of children in foster care from the most recent submission to AFCARS was used to develop national estimates. Because of the use of different estimation procedures and file construction techniques, and improvement in AFCARS reporting, the data in this report, (number 3), should not be compared to data in earlier reports (numbers 1 and 2). Some percentages do not add up to 100% and/or the estimated numbers do not add up to the total number in the category due to rounding.

What were the ages of the children in foster care?

Mean Yrs	9.6	
Median Yrs	9.5	
Under 1 Yr	4%	22,064
1 thru 5 Yrs	26%	147,258
6 thru 10 Yrs	27%	153,318
11 thru 15 Yrs	27%	152,690
16 thru 18 Yrs	14%	76,784
19 + Yrs	1%	7,886

What were the placement settings of children in foster care?

Pre-Adoptive Home	3%	15,489
Foster Family Home (Relative)	29%	161,179
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	48%	268,225
Group Home	8%	42,412
Institution	8%	46,532
Supervised Independent Living	1%	3,731
Runaway	1%	5,202
Trial Home Visit	3%	17,231

What were the lengths of stay for the children in foster care?

Mean Months	33	
Median Months	21	
< 1 Month	4%	20,806
1 to 5 Mos	15%	85,328
6 to 11 Mos	15%	84,690
12 to 17 Mos	11%	62,568
18 to 23 Mos	9%	48,056
24 to 29 Mos	7%	40,514
30 to 35 Mos	5%	30,496
3 to 4 Yrs	16%	88,183
5 Yrs or More	18%	99,359

What were the case goals of the children in foster care?

Reunify with Parent(s) or Principal Caretaker(s)	40%	221,839
Live with Other Relative(s)	3%	19,561
Adoption	20%	109,638
Guardianship	7%	37,161
Long Term Foster Care	5%	30,246
Emancipation	3%	14,657
Case Plan Goal Not Yet Established	23%	126,899

**Children in Foster Care on September 30, 1998  
(continued)**

What was the race/ethnicity of the children in foster care?

White	34%	192,426
Black	44%	244,356
Hispanic	15%	85,889
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	8,832
Asian/Pacific Islander	1%	6,125
Unknown/Unable to Determine	4%	22,373

What was the gender of the children in foster care?

Male	52%	289,185
Female	48%	270,815

**NOTE:** Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

**How many children entered foster care during the Fiscal Year 1998? 286,000**

What were the ages of the children who entered care during Fiscal Year 1998?

Mean Yrs	8.6
Median Yrs	8.5
Under 1 Yr	13% 37,574
1 thru 5 Yrs	25% 72,740
6 thru 10 Yrs	22% 61,981
11 thru 15 Yrs	29% 82,440
16 thru 18 Yrs	11% 31,013
19 + Yrs	0% 252

What was the race/ethnicity of the children who entered care during Fiscal Year 1998?

White	45%	128,435
Black	30%	86,469
Hispanic	16%	46,160
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	6,898
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	4,957
Unknown/Unable to Determine	5%	13,081

**NOTE:** Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

**How many children exited foster care during Fiscal Year 1998? 248,000**

What were the ages of the children who exited care during Fiscal Year 1998?

Mean Yrs	10.2
Median Yrs	10.3
Under 1 Yr	4% 9,942
1 thru 5 Yrs	26% 64,610
6 thru 10 Yrs	23% 56,352
11 thru 15 Yrs	24% 60,503
16 thru 18 Yrs	20% 50,442
19 + Yrs	2% 6,151

What was the race/ethnicity of the children who exited care during Fiscal Year 1998?

White	44%	108,692
Black	33%	81,428
Hispanic	15%	37,183
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	5,797
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	4,288
Unknown/Unable to Determine	4%	10,612

**NOTE:** Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

**Children who exited foster care (Continued)**

What were the lengths of stay of the children who exited foster care during Fiscal Year 1998?

Mean Months	22	
Median Months	11	
< 1 Month	21%	52,873
1 to 5 Mos	17%	43,327
6 to 11 Mos	14%	34,250
12 to 17 Mos	10%	25,492
18 to 23 Mos	7%	17,793
24 to 29 Mos	5%	12,668
30 to 35 Mos	4%	10,146
3 to 4 Yrs	11%	26,066
5 Yrs or More	10%	25,386

What were the outcomes for the children exiting foster care during Fiscal Year 1998?

Reunification	62%	154,150
Living with Other Relative(s)	9%	23,548
Adoption	14%	34,203
Emancipation	7%	16,384
Guardianship	2%	5,836
Transfer to Another Agency	3%	6,943
Runaway	3%	6,356
Death of Child	0%	581

**NOTE:** Deaths are attributable to a variety of causes including medical conditions, accidents and homicide.

**How many children are waiting to be adopted?****122,000**

**NOTES:** Waiting children are identified as children who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parental rights have been terminated. Children 16 years old and older with a goal of emancipation have been excluded from the estimate.

What is the gender distribution of the waiting children?

Male	52%	63,468
Female	48%	58,532

What is the racial/ethnic distribution of the waiting children?

White	29%	35,299
Black	53%	64,717
Hispanic	11%	13,095
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1%	1,459
Asian/Pacific Islander	1%	834
Unknown/Unable to Determine	5%	6,597

**NOTE:** Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

How old were the waiting children when they were removed from their parents or caretakers?

Mean Yrs	4.0
Median Yrs	3.1

less than 1 Yr	30%	37,050
1-5 Yrs	42%	50,778
6-10 Yrs	22%	27,137
11-15 Yrs	6%	6,780
16-18 Yrs	0%	255

How old were the waiting children on September 30, 1998?

Mean Yrs	7.9
Median Yrs	7.6

less than 1 Yr	3%	3,489
1-5 Yrs	35%	42,565
6-10 Yrs	37%	44,747
11-15 Yrs	22%	27,380
16-18 Yrs	3%	3,818

**Children waiting to be adopted on September 30, 1998 (Continued)**

How many months have the waiting children been in Continuous foster care?

Where were the waiting children living on March 31, 1998?

Mean Mos	46		Pre-Adoptive Home	11%	13,539
Median Mos	39		Foster Family Home (Relative)	24%	28,925
			Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	57%	70,054
less than 1 month	1%	790	Group Home	3%	3,546
1 through 5 mos	4%	4,920	Institution	4%	3,647
6 through 11 mos	7%	8,074	Supervised Independent Living	0%	73
12 through 17 mos	8%	9,996	Runaway	0%	366
18 through 23 mos	9%	11,141	Trial Home Visit	1%	729
24 through 29 mos	10%	11,714			
30 through 35 mos	8%	9,651			
36 through 59 mos	27%	32,548			
60 or more mos	27%	33,165			

**How many children in foster care had their parental rights terminated for all living parents? 52,000**

As of March 31, 1998, how many months had elapsed since the parental rights of these foster children were terminated?

Mean Mos	23
Median Mos	14

**How many children were adopted from the public foster care system in FY1998? 36,000**

**SOURCE:** Adoptions finalized in federal fiscal year reported to AFCARS prior to November 14, 1999.

**NOTES:** The number of jurisdictions reporting useable data was 49 including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. An estimate of finalized adoptions for those states which did not report useable data was developed from their contribution to the total number of adoptions in FY 1997. The total figure differs from figures reported for the Adoption Incentive Program because reported adoptions for that program had to meet more restrictive criteria. The federal fiscal year runs from October 1, 1997 through September 30, 1998. Some percentages do not add up to 100% and/or the estimated numbers do not add up to the total number in the category due to rounding.

What is the gender distribution of the children adopted from the public foster care system?

What is the racial/ethnicity distribution of the children adopted from the public foster care system?

Male	51%	18,251	White Non-Hispanic	38%	13,824
Female	49%	17,749	Black Non-Hispanic	46%	16,423
			Hispanic	13%	4,800
			American Indian/Alaskan Native	1%	483
			Asian/Pacific Islander	1%	470

**NOTE:** Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

**Children Adopted in FY 1998 (Continued)**

How old were the children when they were adopted from the public foster care system?

Mean Yrs                6.9  
Median Yrs             6.3

under 1 Yr	2%	577
1-5 Yrs	46%	16387
6-10 Yrs	37%	13177
11-15 Yrs	14%	5145
16-18 Yrs	2%	714

What proportion of the children adopted from the public foster care system are receiving an adoption subsidy?

Receiving subsidy	86%	31,115
Not receiving subsidy	14%	4,885

**Adoptive Family Structure**

Married Couple	66%	23,763
Unmarried Couple	1%	447
Single Female	31%	11,145
Single Male	2%	645

How many months did it take after termination of parental rights for the children to be adopted?

Mean Mos                17  
Median Mos             13

<1 mos	3%	956
1-5 mos	16%	5,636
6-11 mos	30%	10,629
12-17 mos	20%	7,125
18-23 mos	12%	4,248
24-29 mos	7%	2,526
30-35 mos	4%	1,510
3-4 yrs	7%	2,474
5+ yrs	2%	896

What was the relationship of the adoptive parents to the child in the public foster care system prior to the adoption?

Non-relative	20%	7,031
Foster parent (unrelated)	65%	23,452
Step-parent	0%	66
Other relative	15%	5,451

**NOTE:** Relatives who were also foster parents were counted as relatives